

**UNDERCOVER CONVICT S-70401**

Series Proposal

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### **UNDERCOVER CONVICT: S-70401**

A barbaric environment -- in which the possibility of death at the hands of another is a constant and very real threat -- presents numerous opportunities for benevolent and merciful action.

Such an environment exists within the California Prison System.

Likewise, a physically powerful and capable man -- who like an avenging angel tempers his strength with objective morality and keen intelligence -- may prove to be a source of savage rectitude and justice even within that ruthless environment.

Such was the character of Inmate S-70401.

As is the case of soldiers returning from war, when a man is released from such a feral place, he ought to use the strengths and knowledge there developed to maintain and enhance the goodness and decency of society by defending that society from inhuman and criminal behavior.

Such an opportunity existed for the aforementioned Inmate S-70401.

After serving more than a decade of hard time, prisoner J. D. Turner was paroled to participate in a series of undercover operations in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Organized Crime Unit of the San Francisco Police Department, and the Justice Department Of the United States Of America.

Leading a double-life -- in a confusing and criminal outside world -- proved more perplexing and more dangerous than living within the walls of deadly San Quentin.

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## **CONCEPT**

(Based on actual events and true-life characters.)

An ex-con is recruited by his nemesis -- a hard-core prison guard -- to undertake a series of infiltrations and bring down numerous elements of the criminal world.

## ***BRIEF DESCRIPTION***

### **Character**

Ex-Convict J.D. Turner and Prison Guard "Gloves" Hanken will be the main regulars and form the core dynamic of the series.

### **Structure**

Each episode consists of two contrasting throughlines: The main plot includes the Hero's weekly assignment (set in the present) wherein his objective is to engender the demise of a criminal element. The subplot includes events of prison (set in the past) which correspond to the main plot via identical characters (now ten years older) and thematic reflection. Fortunately, the personal true-life history of J.D. Turner will permit deep and complex integration of recurring characters; just because an Ex-Con Friend or Enemy is killed during an episode set in the present, doesn't mean he cannot recur in a subsequent episode in the past.

### **Tone**

As an alternative to "straight police-work shows", many Undercover Convict episodes will be dark complicated morality tales illustrating the consequences of difficult choices made by Turner and Hanken. Desperate situations, tugging loyalties, and allies with hidden motives and intentions, will be the focus of this series. Episodes may include one heart-rending loss of a character engendered either by alienation of Turner, or through death. Many episodes will climax with actions which may prove to be dark and possibly controversial. These include episodes wherein Turner discovers he has been manipulated for the sake of a plan known only to his unseen superiors. His resentment of such tactics will build and he will find his only sympathetic friend to be the once-hated Gloves Hanken.

## ***GLOVES AND TURNER***

(unparalleled story opportunity)

Spending fourteen years in two prisons provided ample opportunity for establishment of Hero's history and a background of relationships with countless characters. This past permits freedom to demonstrate exceptional character-growth: Unlike the proteges and benevolent monks in "Kung Fu", Turner and his mentor, Gloves Hanken, sustained an **extremely adversarial relationship** during the prison years. Though partnered on the current tasks of police work, their past consisted of bloody battles, heinous mind games with real casualties, vendettas of retaliatory violence, and a vow to see each dead before the other. Memories serve as guilt-filled reminders of a dark past (similar to the vampire hero of Forever Knight). Instead of illustrating the negative traits of a convict, or the contrary makeup of a power-hungry guard, these incidents may be used to demonstrate the **tremendous arcs of growth** undertaken by both Turner and Gloves; scenes showing the ruthless men during the decade of their greatest personal development will be *intercut* with the Turner and Hanken of the present; each man now matured and dedicated to his respective duty.

## **METHOD**

Not unlike "Kung Fu", the Main Plots and throughlines of each UNDERCOVER CONVICT episode will consist of present day incidents, while the subplots will draw *briefly* from the fourteen years of Turner's incarceration. The clandestine infiltration of criminal groups (or straight detective and police assignments) will be current. The subplot and flashbacks of each episode will be set in the past and serve at least three dramatic functions:

1. Mythic development of Hero: In prison, Turner will have learned skills and demonstrated courage and intuition so fine-tuned that he will sometimes appear to be super-human. His fighting ability, mental acuity, and criminal adeptness will serve him -- and society -- well as he does battle with seemingly untouchable felonious elements.
2. Reciprocal weaknesses: As a result of developing the above traits *in prison*, Turner will remain ignorant and unskilled in otherwise everyday tasks...he will be a **fish-out-of-water** in the society he shall work to save. He will be baffled by the coyness and fragility of women and will prefer to give up chocolate and smoking rather than learn to use the appropriate vending machines...even driving a car will be a skill he will have to re-learn.
3. Establishment of recurring characters: Turner did time in two prisons and became familiar with an inexhaustible storehouse of "interesting and dangerous characters" from which to draw episode ideas and maintain the ongoing events and conflicts. The tension of a police drama is combined with the option of utilizing truly unique characters of Turner's past and present; **each character Turner knew in prison will possess a solid history and**

**may appear again out in the free world:** Assassin Leo The Skull, Sexy Psychiatrist Jessica Simmons, Feces-throwing Shitty Freddie, Flamboyant Gay Studdly Ray, and the Infamous Charles Manson are but a few.

### ***UNLIKE CONVENTIONAL POLICE PROGRAMS***

Like most cops, Turner will investigate leads, analyze clues, interrogate witnesses (using his own heavy-handed method), and is in mortal danger every minute.

However, unlike any other cop, his standard procedure is to intentionally cut himself off from contact with his advisors and place himself deep inside the bowels of the criminal underworld. There are no radio-calls-to-dispatch for "backup"; when this officer is down, he stays down. The *penalty for discovery* is tremendous. Death, for himself and loved-ones, would be the cost of a single mistake...and the question, "Do they suspect? Do they know?" replays in his head like a broken record.

In addition to the very real threat of force from the outside, Turner will suffer intense inner-turmoil. Loyalties developed during prison years must be broken for the sake of the law and his mission. Best friends made under extremely negative conditions must be abandoned...or befriended again to bring about their fall. To rub salt in the wound of this personal problem, Turner will also be unable to tell his family and loved-ones about his benevolent, though secret, life. Though rehabilitated, he must maintain the illusion that he is as corrupt as the day he entered prison so that he may infiltrate the societies of evil men and engineer their downfall. This "false malevolence" will serve Turner well...except when he must face his family whose shame at his incarceration is surpassed only by their shame at his apparent decision to remain in a life-of-crime once released. A special pocket of this shame weighs heavily on Turner because of his younger brother blue-uniformed policeman, DANNY TURNER. Turner cannot tell Danny -- or any other family member -- that he is now one of the good guys and an unacknowledged hero...it would mean certain death for himself, and possibly death for his relatives, too. Well, maybe GRANDMA TURNER can know...even a tough ex-con needs a confidante who actually gives a damn and Turner doesn't worry too much: no Mob Thug in San Francisco could match Grandma's Irish blood, temper...or thirty-eight caliber revolver.

### **RECURRING CHARACTERS**

(Note: All characters are based on actual persons.)

**J.D. TURNER** -- Inmate (flashbacks) / Undercover Agent (current). Two years U.S. Marines. Two years freelance mercenary. Sentenced to one-to-ten years

for controversial manslaughter incident -- actually self-defense. Killed two cons in prison -- also self-defense -- but third incident results in sentence of ten-to-thirty years. Overall, a total of fourteen years in prison; three in solitary confinement where he developed phenomenal mental acuity. Prison time punctuated by ongoing clashes with Prison Guard Bart Hankens, love affair with beautiful prison staff psychiatrist Jessica Simmons, and association with best friend assassin Leo-The-Skull. Turner was considered a hero by all inmates housed in the California Department Of Corrections...except for a few, whose desire to reach the top of the pyramid did not outlive their failure to parry a J.D. Turner counter-attack. Turner was eventually paroled to participate in government-sponsored Undercover Convict program. The danger of his lethal assignment is surpassed only by the frustration that his family still believes he was released only to continue a life of crime; he seems a particular disappointment to his brother Danny Turner, a California Highway Patrolman. J.D. Turner possesses a deep core of morality beneath the shell of a ruthless warrior. The affair with Simmons proved very costly; rescinded parole, a year in The Hole, and a tugging of unfinished business...

**SGT. BARTHOLOMEW “GLOVES” HANKEN** -- Prison guard responsible for developing the “cakemaker” undercover convict infiltration program. Turner’s arch-nemesis during Turner’s years in prison (flashbacks) when he used to beat prisoners while wearing leather hand-covers. Hanken is currently partnered with Turner to battle organized crime, destroy terrorist rings, and occasionally encourages Turner to deliver justice when justice’s hands are tied. Hanken often plays intermediary between Turner and hot-tempered officer Pedro Medina. Hanken is a joint-wise man whose steely determination is tempered only by the soft spot reserved for his terminally-ill wife.

**LT. PEDRO MEDINA** -- College-educated, clean-cut, by-the-book and does his paperwork...everything Turner despises. Medina, however, is courageous beyond his training and deep down inside he knows the undercover convict program is the best way to accomplish the mutual goal of all three men...the downfall of bad guys. Medina’s methodical routine rarely endangers himself. However, such conventional and predictable follow-through will often endanger J.D. Turner -- who is in the field -- and this is a source of tremendous antagonism between the rivals who are alive only because Hanken prevents them from slitting each other’s throats. Every episode, Turner gives Medina three chances to fuck up, “That’s one. That’s two...” God protect Medina if Turner ever reaches “three”. Medina has a wife, Desiree, and twin daughters; he is dedicated to the work because he actually thinks he can make the world a better place to raise children. Turner harbors no such fantasies, but *wishes* their work would make a difference...perhaps, at this level, Turner and Medina ain’t so very different afterall.

**GRANDMA TURNER** -- Originally Turner was ordered to tell no one about his assignment, especially family members who could be used as hostages. Turner

may acknowledge the danger -- and keep his true objective hidden from his Little Brother C.H.P. Officer Danny -- but there is no reason to fear for Grandma's safety... no Mob Thug in San Francisco could match her Irish blood, temper...or forty-five caliber revolver. She is a familial confidant and the only civilian who will know the details of Turner's alter-ego life. A beacon of wisdom, she serves as Turner's mentor when dealing with issues and problems of the outside world; relationships, manners, and Christmas tree decorations. Many things "normal" people take for granted are quite foreign to Turner, and Grandma's sagely advice will help ease the transformation of her "fish out of water" grandson. Think: Gena Rowlands.

**LEO-THE-SKULL** -- Inmate. Considered the only man at San Quentin and Folsom prisons more dangerous than Turner...so Turner befriended immediately. Skull was serving back-to-back life-sentences and would kill an inmate for two cartons of cigarettes. He cut off a man's ear because the man stepped on his toe. To demonstrate his affection for Turner, Skull once suggested they be cellmates. Turner refused. His reason? "Because you're insane, Skull." Skull threw Turner against a wall and pressed a shank to Turner's jugular. Turner stared into depthless eyes and said, "Killing me is a bad idea, Leo. I'm the only friend you got." Too true. So the deadly duo went for coffee. They were an unstoppable force -- just ask Hanken.

**PSYCHIATRIST JESSICA SIMMONS** -- Rich snobby bitch. Married. He needs her for profiles on Serial Killer he is hunting, but she cannot know he's an Undercover Cop. Why does she cooperate? She was his lover behind the walls of San Quentin when she was the prison's staff psychiatrist. History includes their affair, her promises to divorce her husband were Turner to be paroled, the renegeing of that promise, the subsequent controversy and her resignation. One question remained...Did she set Turner up to be killed -- by an attacking Inmate -- once Turner decided he would make their affair public upon his release? It is not easy to break away from the best sex of your life, and some episodes will include attempts to continue their twisted relationship. Eventually, she will have to come clean about the knife-attack incident.

**GAY STUDDLY RAY** -- Released Inmate. Impeccable fashion sense. Funny, resourceful sidekick. Comic relief. Extremely intelligent, well-read, gay and flamboyant. Present: Works as drag queen in North Beach nightclub. Prison past: Painted cell-walls bright colors and, like any other inmate, taped pictures of Marilyn Monroe everywhere...but not for the same reason as the others cons. Think: Jeters in Fisher King.

**CHARLES MANSON** -- Inmate (no shit). Acquaintance of Turner during his years at Quentin. Turner was warned by the Chow Con to break his association with Manson...it looked bad. Turner didn't care and advised the Chow Con to be armed the next time he brought such an insipid warning. Manson will serve as "the devil on Turner's shoulder" during memories of the prison.

**DANNY TURNER** -- Cop. Young idealistic officer of the California Highway Patrol who also happens to be J.D. Turner's little brother. He was fourteen when J.D. was incarcerated. Though he knew his big brother built a reputation in the joint, the boy was prepared to forgive J.D. upon his release and be reunited as a family. J.D.'s willingness to do good by participating in the undercover convict program is, of course, a secret. Indeed, Turner's reputation as a hard-assed criminal must be heightened, and Turner's apparent lack of rehabilitation is a terrible source of shame for straight-laced Danny, and cause for much antagonism between the two brothers. Especially heart-breaking for J.D. who must maintain the crooked facade and increase the chasm between them even as beloved Danny describes the honor, courage, and hard life of good cops...attributes J.D. possesses, but must keep hidden. Needless to say, holidays at Grandma Turner's are worse than at the home of any other dysfunctional family in the nation. In one episode, Danny is forced to arrest J.D. for a misdemeanor. J.D. will endure court testimony by his brother, a recount of his crimes by an Assistant District Attorney, and spend a week in County Jail. And, for the sake of the program, Medina and Hanken will let J.D. serve the time. Hell, county is a Holiday Inn compared to Folsom or Q.

**THE SUIT** -- (Gender?) Upper-Echelon Officer of Unknown Federal Agency who has unofficially approved and funded Hanken's program. A manipulator whose identity may never be known, an enigma. The Suit often utilizes the program for his/her own political ends; It is bad enough when Turner is used to "avert" a false emergency just in time for an agency to receive supplementary funding, but it is unforgivable when Turner himself becomes a pawn who unknowingly *creates* such an emergency in order to ruin the political career of an opponent in a rival agency. Such behavior infuriates J.D. Turner and though he may never learn The Suit's identity, he will fathom the string-pulling and reveal The Suit to be as evil as the criminals who are targets for eradication. A slap in the face to Turner's intelligence.

**JASPER STIRS** -- Bad Con Gone Straight. He is a good man who now resents Turner because Turner is still "in a life of crime" while the formerly Jasper is struggling to feed his own family by working in greasy diner. Periodically, he is tempted to ask Turner to get him back into crime. Turner is actually reinforcing Jasper's commitment to stay clean...by showing him *why* he should stay clean.

**SHITTY FREDDIE** -- Inmate. Wacky prisoner avoided even by Turner and Skull. Freddie would save his feces in a paper bag and hurl it at unsuspecting cons taking exercise in the Big Yard. Incoming new-meat cons were especially susceptible to Freddie's form of "welcome baptism".

**MARY KECK** -- Turner's seedy girlfriend in the criminal world. She "knows" he is a criminal, but sees something in his eyes that makes her believe he is a good

man at heart. A part-time prostitute who is waiting for Turner to "snap out of his criminal phase" and carry her away from all this. Ironic, ain't it?

**PAT "AX" FLYNN** -- Released inmate. Former acquaintance of Turner's. Had done time for ax murders wherein he would remove corpse's head and hands to hinder identification. Tries to be Turner's friend once on the outside, but Turner snubs him and may become a target of retaliation. (See: Obsession Of Jessica Simmons.)

**WARDEN DAVIS** -- A nervous wreck who worried that Turner did, indeed, possess more power over the prison than himself. Davis turned a blind-eye permitting Gloves Hanken to deal with Turner as he saw fit. Guilty of complicity. Once Turner is released, Warden Davis will be embarrassed more than a few times when Turner crashes a mucky-muck fund-raiser featuring the distinguished warden as guest speaker.

**THE KID** and Other Friends From Prison. These include Tweety, Jasper, Porky, Gay Studdly Ray and Zip who are powerful allies with strong loyalties developed in the worst conditions. The conflict? Though Turner will do his best to help these men once they are on the outside, he will be forced to break loyalties for the sake of his assignments...or break his assignments because of his loyalties and unpaid debts to his friends.

**BLADE** and Other Rivals From Prison. These include Shotgun, Needle, Shank, and Ash who are dangerous enemies with scores to settle. The conflict? Turner will have to tolerate some of them to maintain his ex-con facade. On more than one occasion, however, a rival will pursue Turner and a past grudge will be settled by knife-fight on San Francisco's foggy waterfront.